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CHALLENGE



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ALL SCENARIOS LEAD TO IMPERIALIST OIL WAR



Elections Show Capitalist Parties Partners Against Working Class

Despite the Republican election victory, the main wing of the U.S. ruling class appears to be gaining control of U.S. foreign policy, especially in regards to Iraq.

Several months ago, the Cheney-Rumsfeld "go-it-alone" faction of the Bush White House was spoiling for an immediate fight. However, the State Department, the CIA and the Pentagon, led by Colin Powell, realized the stakes were far too high to invade half-cocked. They arm-twisted Bush into first getting Congressional approval for war powers and then new UN weapons inspections in Iraq.

The current UN farce is a cover for U.S. concessions to French, Russian and Chinese imperialists, and allows U.S. imperialism to get its ducks in a row before the shooting starts. While we can't predict the timetable, another war to control Iraqi oil is coming. It will lead to a spiral of ever wider and more lethal fighting.

U.S. imperialism's control of energy supplies remains crucial to global domination. The main Persian Gulf oil producers hold 63% of the world's proven oil reserves. Only Saudi Arabia has more than Iraq — and Iraq may well have vast amounts of as yet undiscovered reserves. U.S. rulers will stop at nothing to control this prize. While their rivals still cannot challenge them directly, every bloody step the U.S. takes will sharpen contradictions within the Persian Gulf, and between the U.S. and its chief competitors.

The capitalist law of maximum profit is written in workers' blood. We must prepare for war by building a mass PLP and the movement for communist revolution.

Scenarios for War

The present situation is still highly fluid, and could develop in several

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The Republican victory in the midterm election is not necessarily a defeat for the Eastern Establishment. Bush and the liberal rulers have clashed over the "Homeland Security" police state and his handling of the economy. A Republican White House and Congress can serve as the liberals' whipping boys while the police state develops. A minimum of "three, four, or five years at best" will be necessary to reorganize the government for fascism, according to the liberals' new pal, John McCain. (*New York Times*, 11/17). This might be just enough time for a liberal strongman to emerge with a broader program than Bush's half-baked plan for militarizing society divided between government control and a privatization scheme favoring his cronies.

But the rulers need major economic cutbacks now to pay for the costly wars they're planning to

launch. Conservative Republican Reagan's budget cuts and anti-worker attacks paved the way for the liberal Clinton's economic assault on workers from 1992 to 2000. A similar process may be occurring, with Republicans leading the charge and Democrats and liberal Republicans administering the coup de grâce.

New York City provides a potential example. Republican Mayor Bloomberg, a former Democrat, is promising devastating cuts in education and services as well as higher taxes. With NYC's unemployment rate steadily rising, these new body blows against the workers have the enthusiastic editorial support of the liberal *New York Times*. The latter preaches about the "unavoidable" need for "layoffs and other spending cuts, including the city's education

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DEMOPUBLICANS ENEMIES OF THE WORKING CLASS

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and social programs.” The *Times* (11/13) urges billionaire Bloomy to slash benefits for the city’s work force, which it calls “out of line with the private sector.”

New York will set the pattern for other U.S. cities. The liberal media and politicians may shed crocodile tears over Republican “heartlessness” while simultaneously encouraging it. Democrats and Republicans may squabble over tactics and partisan advan-

tage, but in the final analysis they work as partners against our class, to serve the rulers’ need for profit and world domination.

The only political party that serves workers’ interests is the PLP. The only way to “vote” for it is to join and build it in the heat of class struggle.✪

NO ‘LESSER EVILS’

The Pentagon’s recently revealed plan to eavesdrop on people who use the Internet comes not from KKK-lover Attorney General Ashcroft but from the Markle Foundation, headed by liberal **Zoe Baird**, Clinton’s first nominee for Attorney-General. Baird also sits on the Council of Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution, two of the Liberal Establishment’s key think-tanks.

All Roads Lead to Imperialist Oil War

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directions over the next few years. Each will lead to the increasing isolation of U.S. imperialism.

In the rosiest scenario for U.S. rulers, Saddam and his Republican Guard are quickly defeated and a new, pro-U.S. puppet government turns Iraq into an investment paradise for Exxon Mobil. Iraqi oil production reaches 8 million barrels a day, and world oil prices go below \$20 a barrel. OPEC would no longer have firm control over prices and supply. U.S.-imposed lower prices could wreck the profits and economies of OPEC producers. As a former Iraqi oil minister said, 8 million barrels of Iraqi oil a day would be “the greatest problem ever faced by OPEC.” (*Fortune*, 11/25).

At the other end of the spectrum, the U.S. “coalition” gets bogged down in a tough fight and civilian casualties are high (The international health organization Medact predicts as many as 500,000.) The U.S. wins the military battle, but a prolonged occupation makes U.S. troops easy targets for al Qaeda terrorist attacks. Oil prices rise, and the world economy continues its present slump, or worse. In reaction to worsening conditions, strikes could erupt in the U.S. which would face intense repression from the U.S. bosses’ heightened police-state apparatus.

Saddam could sabotage Iraq’s oil fields as he did in Kuwait, and Israeli bosses could use the turmoil to further their own military agenda. The bin Laden forces will not give up trying to wrest oil wealth from U.S. hands and Iranian bosses won’t allow themselves to be outstripped by a pro-U.S. Iraq. Every scenario runs the risk of fanning anti-U.S. hatred and sparking nationalist/religious rebellions throughout the Arab/Muslim world. Political and economic rivalries between the U.S. and the other major imperialists will intensify as relations begin to resemble pre-World War II Europe.

Imperialism Leads to War — Smash It With Revolution

The stakes of another Iraq war are very high. The dangers are great. Some members of the U.S.

national security establishment aren’t ready to let Bush unleash the slaughter. But most signals point to war relatively soon. There is an ongoing build-up of U.S. military hardware and personnel in the Gulf. The Air Force has increased the number of targets and bombing raids against radar and command and control centers in Iraq’s “no-fly zones.” The U.S. is preparing an Iraqi puppet “exile army.” The Horn of Africa, a choke-point along the oil route out of the Persian Gulf, is becoming a U.S. military base to develop “skills that could be applied in Washington’s campaign against terrorist groups or on the battlefields of Iraq.” (*New York Times*, 11/17).

U.S. RULERS WAGE NUCLEAR WAR

As U.S. rulers prepare for war on Iraq, the civilian population of that country, not Saddam Hussein, will bear the brunt of the hostilities. And it will probably be even more nuclear than the last Gulf War which was, in effect, a nuclear war.

In 1991, the U.S. military deployed hundreds of tons of weapons, many of them anti-tank shells made of depleted uranium 238. This material is 1.7 times more dense than lead. When incorporated into an anti-tank shell and fired, it achieves great momentum, cutting through tank armor like a hot knife through butter.

When uranium 238 hits a tank at high speed it bursts into flames, producing tiny aerosolized particles less than 5 microns in diameter. It is a potent radioactive carcinogen, emitting a relatively heavy alpha particle composed of 2 protons and 2 neutrons. Once inside the body it can produce cancer in the lungs, bones, blood or kidneys. It can enter the body in the lung if inhaled, a wound if it penetrates flesh, or if ingested since it concentrates in the food chain and contaminates water. It has a half-life of 4.5 billion years, meaning the areas in which this ammunition was used in Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf War will remain effectively radioactive permanently.

Children are 10 to 20 times more sensitive to the effects of radiation than adults. Pediatricians in the Iraqi town of Basra are reporting an

increase of 6 to 12 times in the incidence of childhood leukemia and cancer. Because of the U.S.- and UN-backed sanctions, they have no access to drugs or effective radiation machines to treat their patients. The incidence of congenital malformations has doubled in the areas where these weapons were used. Among them are babies born with only one eye or missing all or part of their brain.

But war and fascism can provide opportunities for revolutionary growth. Some are emerging in the mass movement, the military and the class struggle, which will surely sharpen worldwide as the situation ripens over time. Modest gains today can lead to momentous triumphs in the years ahead, and eventually to the only way out of this hell of imperialist war and fascist terror: communist revolution.✪

One medical researcher reported that some U.S. veterans exposed to uranium 238 are excreting uranium in their urine a decade later. Other reports indicate it is being excreted in their semen. Almost one-third of the U.S. tanks employed in Desert Storm used anti-tank shells made of uranium 238, exposing their crews to whole-body gamma radiation. The Pentagon’s own studies prior to Desert Storm warned that aerosol uranium exposure under battlefield conditions could lead to cancers of the lung and bone, kidney damage, non-malignant lung disease, neurocognitive disorders, chromosomal damage and birth defects.

Butcher that he is, Saddam Hussein can only dream of having a fraction of the destructive power possessed by U.S. imperialism’s weapons of mass destruction. The hypocrisy of the U.S. ruling class, Republicans and Democrats, is only surpassed by their cold-blooded pursuit of profit. From Baghdad to Washington, DC, workers need communist revolution. This is not some utopian dream, but a practical matter of survival.✪

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WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim communism is dead, capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages,

money and profit. Everyone will share society’s benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!



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PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS REJECT RIDGE AND WAR PLANS

PHILADELPHIA, PA, Nov. 13 — "It feels like living in Berlin in 1938 [the year before the Nazi's launched World War II]..." That's how one of our friends described the moves toward war and fascism, in the country and in the American Public Health Association (APHA). We can all learn from her sense of urgency.

As 5,000 public health workers and professionals streamed into the giant auditorium for the opening session of the annual APHA meeting, colleagues distributing "WAR VS. PUBLIC HEALTH" leaflets greeted them. Last summer, the APHA leadership invited fascist Homeland Security boss Tom Ridge to be the keynote speaker because "that's where the funding is."

The leaflet and a resolution against collaborating with the oil war was the product of months of phone calls and discussions prior to the meeting.

PLP members in APHA provided leadership to these discussions. We helped organize for a floor demonstration against Ridge, but shortly before his scheduled appearance he became "unavailable." Fearing his replacement would get the same treatment, APHA leaders delayed Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona's speech over an hour.

The next day, at a 6:30 AM Section

business meeting, people debated whether or not to support the more strongly-worded version of the resolution, "Opposing the Subordination of Public Health to National Defense and Anti-Terrorism." A young statistician said, "If we take an extreme position we'll be marginalized. Public health people need to be at the table when policy is developed." She seemed uncomfortable talking about politics, maybe because she works for a federal agency. In fact, most of the 60 people at the meeting looked uncomfortable.

Then a hospital research instructor said, "There are some tables we shouldn't be sitting at." That did it. A nurse administrator said, "If we don't take a stand, who will?" A soft-spoken professor added, "We've already been marginalized. Since when has the President or Congress cared what we think? We should just do what's right."

When the section chairman finally called for a show of support for the resolution, every hand in the room went up. Similar scenes unfolded in other Sections and Caucuses. When the resolution came before the Governing Council, 95% voted in favor!

Our political work here shows the potential for moving large numbers of people. A relatively small number of



comrades with a few hundred supporters forced Ridge to cancel and had a big impact on this 30,000-member organization. But it also shows the potential danger of being swallowed up by the mass movement and not building the Party forces for communist revolution.

One comrade and a friend met during the debate on another resolution, "Opposing War in Central Asia and the Persian Gulf." After it passed with an 82% majority, they pursued an APHA big shot to request a press release be drafted. They were told that opposing war is "not one of the strategic priorities of the organization," and that their vote didn't reflect the "true opinions" of APHA. After the big shot left, the PLP member gave her

friend a copy of *CHALLENGE*, saying, "That's why I'm a communist. People like that *can't* do what's right. They're wedded to the system."

With the vast majority of participants, we share the desire to see a healthy population living without the threat of war. But we must wage a tireless struggle to win our friends to see that this is not simply Bush's war; it grows from the nature of imperialism. Only communist revolution can defeat it. This is the difficult task we're committed to carrying out in APHA. Over the coming period, we can consolidate the good work accomplished here by winning more public health workers and professionals to read, write for and distribute *CHALLENGE*.

DEMOCRATS JOIN BUSH IN UNION-BUSTING ATTACK ON MILLION FEDERAL WORKERS

Those who think the liberal Democrats are more "pro-union" than the Republicans better think again. As soon as the polls closed on Election Day, the Democrats joined the Republicans in giving Bush the Homeland Security Agency he had originally proposed, including his request to bypass all Civil Service and Collective Bargaining protections for more than 170,000 workers. Those opposing it, like Kennedy, were just maintaining their cover as "friends of labor," after the outcome had already been decided.

The new agency will combine 22 existing ones, like Customs, the Coast Guard, the INS, Border Patrol and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Bush will have the final say on work rules, job assignments, transfers, layoffs and more. Under the new plan, unions and the government can negotiate any issue with a "neutral" arbitrator. But Bush, or whoever follows him, will have the power to overrule any agreement and impose a settlement.

Smelling blood, Bush announced plans to privatize half the federal workforce, more than 850,000 jobs! After a 30-day "public review," he's free to offer these jobs to the lowest bidder, which means lowest wages, lowest health care benefits and no unions. What's more, it will set the tone for all state, county and city workers as well. With union membership at an all-time low and dropping, with the rulers going to war, and with

a rapidly developing fascist police state, these union-busting attacks on more than one million federal workers will dwarf Reagan's firing of the striking air traffic controllers and breaking the PATCO union in 1982.

So what will the union leaders do? Probably not much. They've been leading the workers into the arms of U.S. imperialism and support for the profit system for over 60 years. Crippled and blinded by their own patriotism, they couldn't do much if they wanted to. They didn't stop the closing of the steel mills or protect retirees from losing their pensions and health benefits. They didn't stop Boeing from imposing a contract costing thousands of jobs. They didn't even appear interested in stopping Bush from using a Taft-Hartley injunction against 10,500 west coast dockworkers.

All that said, we could see the possibility of a wave of mass demonstrations as workers oppose these attacks. The union leaders, true to form, will try to channel the anger of the workers into support for the same Democratic Party that gave Bush his tax cut, war powers and Homeland Security Agency. PLP can seize the opportunity to lead more workers in struggle and build a mass base for communist revolution, by winning more workers to become *CHALLENGE* distributors. ☸

AFSCME Retirees Hear NYC Cuts Linked to Iraq Invasion

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 11 — All our lives workers are told by the media, the school system and all sorts of boosters of capitalism that communism doesn't work and the exploitative free market profit system is the best thing since sliced bread. Once again reality has burst the wishful thinking of the bosses and their boosters. Here in NYC, billionaire Mayor Bloomberg has announced budget gaps of nearly \$7.5 billion for the next two years, the biggest crisis since the mid-1970s. It comes at a time when such crises are "...circulating like a virus through cities all across America." (*New York Times*, 11/18)

Bloomberg has proposed bridging the budget gaps through service cuts (with layoffs and a hiring freeze), new taxes, aid from the federal government, and givebacks from unionized city workers. But Bloomberg's tax plan has been labeled "dead on arrival" by some State legislators who must approve his plan. (*Times*, 11/15) Clearly some fairy tales are being passed off as reality here.

Similarly, at the November Executive Board meeting of the AFSCME's District Council 37, representing over 120,000 city workers, the president of one of its larger locals challenged Executive Director Lillian Roberts about the layoffs. She said they would be averted by a union-produced "white paper" calling for voiding of outside contracts. Such challenges

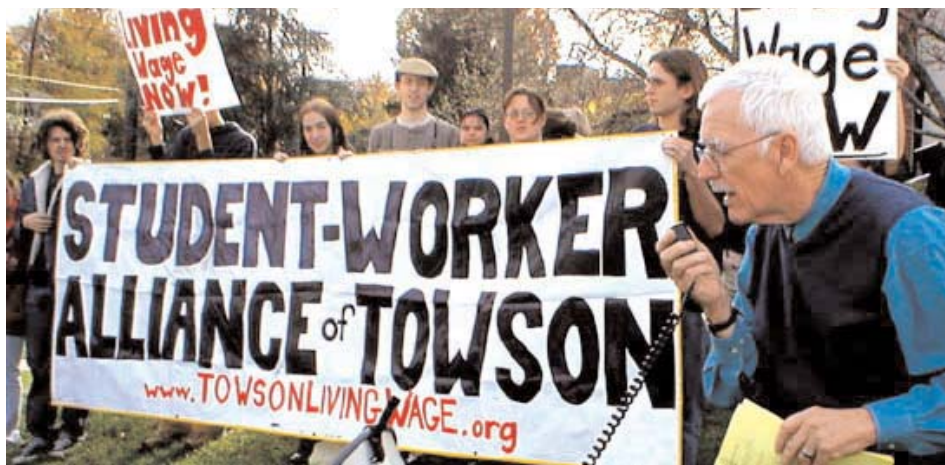
in the upper ranks of union hierarchy usually reflect impatience with strategies that will not calm the anger of rank-and-file members.

Such anger appeared at the usually placid DC 37 retirees association, upon hearing of the possible effects of the budget crisis. They want to preserve their health benefits and city services. After hearing that their best hope was to elect "friends of labor," they were mainly quiet. When a recently retired worker argued that workers would have to organize to fight against these cuts, linking the city's budget crisis to the looming oil war on Iraq, he was warmly applauded.

He said the current budget crisis was like the storm in the movie, "The Perfect Storm," combining a fiscal crisis in city, county and state with the expenditures of tens of billions for war on Iraq. To fight it, we must break the State's fascist Taylor law banning government-worker strikes.

The bosses want workers to believe capitalism will rule forever, to fall for the lies of their lackey politicians and the deadened strategies of the stooge union leaders. PL'ers fight to bring clarity to workers, understanding of the problems we face and how to overcome them. We join with them in many types of organizations to build the struggles needed to survive life under capitalism and to illuminate the road to a communist future. ☸

Profits Prevent A Living Wage



TOWSON, MD, Nov. 15 — About 75 Towson students, faculty, staff, and alumni, organized by the Student-Worker Alliance of Towson (SWAT), rallied at the Towson Univ. Administration building today to support the fight for campus workers' rights. Joined by dozens of others from unions, churches, community

groups and an area high school, SWAT members marched to demand a living wage, health coverage and the right to organize for all Towson staff, outsourced or not. SWAT gave interim university president Dan Jones a week to respond.

It was eight months to the day since our protest outside now-

resigned President Mark L. Perkins' inauguration ceremony. Then the movement was little more than members of the left-wing student coalition Towson Action Group with no broad-based support. Campus police easily harassed or dismissed us quite often.

Students are barred from talking with food service and housekeeping workers about a living wage in the presence of their employers (Aramark or Chartwells). One SWAT member told the crowd, "They said I wasn't allowed to talk to the workers and shouldn't be there."

But during these eight months we've won more than 80 faculty supporters, interviewed and befriended housekeepers, attended shift changes, amassed support from community organizations and produced the largest living-wage rally so far at Towson. In the next eight months we will support the demand that

Towson's Chartwells contract — expiring in June 2003 — be renegotiated only with contract bids that include living-wage provisions.

We in PLP, while involved in and supporting workers' struggles, must also explain how profits are extracted from the labor of workers. There really can never be a "fair wage" for workers since they produce all value and therefore, as a class, deserve to reap all value, which is impossible under capitalism. While involved in the class struggle, PLP points out — contrary to liberals and anarchists — how capitalism lives off constant workers' exploitation and war. The only long-term solution is to fight for workers' power. In this Living Wage campaign, daily contact and interpersonal relations with both students and workers will open up opportunities to win them to fight for this outlook and join PLP. ☼

China's Capitalist Party Rides Roughshod Over Workers

Many pundits claim the recently concluded 16th Congress of the Chinese "Communist" Party propelled that country towards capitalism. But China has been a developing capitalist power for over thirty years. A party of the working class, fighting for communism and waging class struggle, was put to rest a long time ago.

Outgoing President Jiang Zemin welcomed millionaires, landowners and factory owners into the "C"P (Capitalist Party). Advancing his "three represents" theory, he said that "all people's interests are basically identical: we must allow people to advance together to the common goal of prosperity [and] encourage them to create social wealth." (*The Guardian*, London, 11/13)

Jiang declared that the "three represents" are his legacy, supplanting the ideas of Marx and Lenin. But this "new theory" is basically Mussolini's old Corporate State (workers and bosses uniting to end the class struggle). He warned U.S. imperialists that China would use force against anyone who "separated Taiwan from China." As China becomes a more powerful capitalist country, it could face many military confrontations with the U.S. over control of Asia.

While Jiang paid lip service to China's unemployment and the gap between rich and poor, the restructuring of state-owned companies has left 48 million workers jobless. Millions of workers have not abandoned the class struggle and have participated in strikes and mass rebellions, reacting to the reversal of many gains made by workers and peasants. According to professor Wang Shaoquang of the Political Science Dept. of the Univ. of Hong Kong, "the disparity in the standard of living between rich and poor

is one of the highest in the world." (*El País*, Madrid).

The seeds of this capitalist restoration were planted under Mao's concept of "New Democracy," and were fully realized with the defeat of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in the 1960's. When the communists seized power in 1949, they claimed they were building a "new democratic state" where workers, peasants, the petit-bourgeoisie and sections of the national bourgeoisie shared power. This is impossible, since only one class can hold state power.

By the 1960s, China was reverting to capitalism instead of going forward towards a communist society. Mao, who made a great contribution to the communist movement, initiated the Cultural Revolution to rout the "red bourgeoisie." But when more than 40 million revolutionary workers and youth tried to go all the way to communism (establishing the Shanghai Commune), Mao and the infamous Gang of Four smashed the Red Guards.

When Mao died in 1975, Deng Xiaoping (one of the leading "capitalist roaders" attacked during the Cultural Revolution), arrested the Gang of Four, dismantled the Commune system and started the huge transfer of wealth from workers and peasants to private capitalists, leading to the 16th Congress.

We have learned a lot from the defeat of the old communist movement. The main lesson is that you can't build communism by making concessions to capitalism. You can't share power with capitalist rulers. Long Live the Red Guard! Fight for Communism! ☼

Anti-War Conference Shows Students Want, Need, Defend Red Ideas

"I stayed up last night thinking about how the workers of the world could take power," said a participant in a college student conference discussing what was missing from the liberal-led anti-war movement and how to struggle within it.

There were three sessions: anti-racism, anti-imperialism, and the worker-student alliance. All three topics produced vigorous discussions and some plans. We related the importance of anti-racism to a class analysis of the world. Racism comes from the bosses' need to make super-profits and justify exploitation and war with racist lies, all growing out of the wage system. We reviewed the dangers of nationalism and the need for revolution. A Latino student organization leader said he saw how PLP differed from other groups because we put the fight against racism front and center in the fight against capitalism.

The anti-imperialist section focused on the causes of economic crisis and why the imperialists fight over oil. A student explained how Exxon-Mobil drives for control over Iraqi oil so it can sell to, and control the supply of, oil to its capitalist rivals.

The last session opened with a worker demonstrating how workers are open to revolutionary ideas. Lately mechanics on his job have told supervisors, "The problem with this war drive is that it's covered with oil." The conference emphasized the potential power of the dockworkers and urged people to fight in campus groups to demonstrate at the docks against the war.

Some students described their organizing of an alliance with campus workers. Another told of increased interest in the Party's ideas during and after a campus workers strike in which they denounced the bosses' war budget, blaming it for the cutbacks in education. We pointed out that the working class has the power to oppose imperialist war by stopping the bosses' war production and by viewing soldiers as members of the working class in the fight against these oil wars.

The day-long conference left everyone with plans and the motivation to carry out these ideas on their own campus. It was inspiring to hear our friends recount their own rich experiences organizing around and defending PLP's ideas and putting forward the need for revolution.

The best part came that night in a discussion of the fight for workers' power, communism, starting with a group reading of Road to Revolution IV. With the floor open to all, questions were asked about socialism, religion, motivation and the basis of ideology. PLP members discussed the best way to answer questions people raise about human nature and collectivity. Members and non-members answered the questions and introduced other ones.

One was how can we stop some people from wanting more than others. We talked about the power of the collective fighting to eliminate oppression and, in the process, changing ourselves to be motivated by what's needed to improve the collective, not just the individual. There are many examples from the Soviet Union and China of putting the collective first, like the fight to defeat the Nazis. It was obvious that people are very interested in analyzing how the working class can make a revolution.

Finally there is the importance of exposing the university itself as part and parcel of capitalism, its role in war research and promoting U.S. imperialism. Much of our work must be done right inside the classroom, challenging the bosses' ideas that are an integral part of the curriculum.

The conference organizers came into the day somewhat leery about how receptive people would be of PLP's ideas. Those at the conference were much closer to the Party than we expected. Many are ready for and want to hear and understand our line. It became clear we can be much bolder in raising the need for communist revolution and for the PLP. ☼

WORKERS OF THE WORLD WRITE!

"The millions of workers who joined the strike demonstrated they will fight the bosses' and fake leftists' drive to destroy their future."

—Bandera Rosa

Upping the Ante Among Industrial Workers

I want to thank "Consolidated Red" for his letter (*CHALLENGE*, 11/20) about "Two Steel Workers in the Lunch Room." It rang true. Joe, like many workers, often raise issues in a way that reflects the limits of the agenda imposed by the bosses and their labor lieutenants. "Consolidated Red" showed how to break through those limits — linking the particular grievance to developing war and fascism. He also asked for suggestions for a campaign to help "[develop] all our contacts with steel workers." We need more letters like this!

I work in aerospace, another industry plagued by massive layoffs. Here's my suggestions to start this discussion. First, we need a campaign to increase *CHALLENGE* circulation. More hand-to-hand sales will give us the confidence to advance our ideas in the unions and among industrial workers in general.

More readers and sellers allow us to up the ante, as well as directly present our revolutionary politics to a broader audience and sharpen the contradictions between the working class and the bosses. Necessarily, that means intensifying the contradictions between workers and the union misleaders, even as we become more involved in the day-to-day work of these unions.

CHALLENGE networks allow us to raise demands that reflect our class interests both inside the unions and to workers in the plants and connected communities. We want these demands to put the interests of the international working class above all. Campaigns against racist layoffs, for jobs or even a shorter work-week should never be presented as a cure-all for capitalism's evils. Nor can we allow these campaigns to be distorted along nationalist lines. We raise such demands in a particular situation not to reform capitalism but to sharpen the division between the bosses' agents and workers at large.

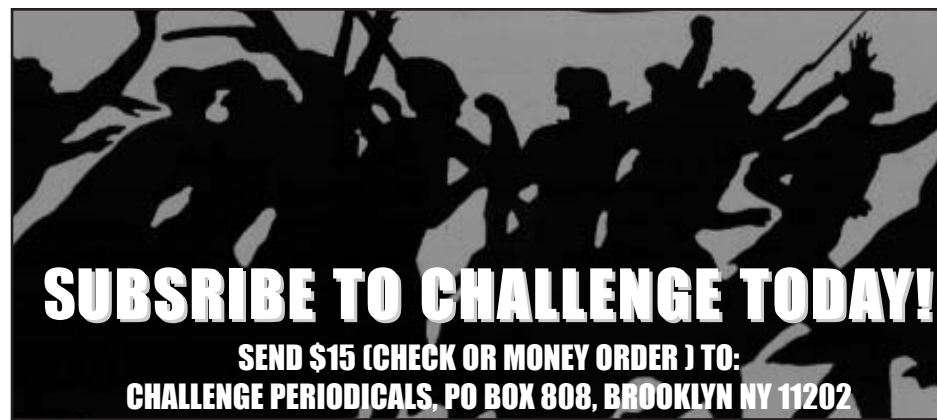
This clarification of class interests offers an opportunity to win workers to a revolutionary understanding. It instills some confidence that workers can be won to fight for their own interests. If combined with communist base-building and study that emphasizes the primacy of revolution over reform, such class struggle can win recruits to the Party.

Thanks "Consolidated Red" for opening this discussion. Much more needs to be said and done. We must hear more about campaigns among industrial workers in *CHALLENGE*.

Aerospace Red

Does Bowling Score A Strike or A Spare?

Michael Moore's new movie, "Bowling for Columbine" is being shown at local theaters and not just the one or two that typically run documentaries. Maybe it's because Moore has estab-



lished a reputation (with his other films and TV shows), or maybe it's because of the topic, violence. I expected the film would be just another argument for gun control, but it's more sophisticated than that.

Moore argues that the easy availability of weapons can't be the sole or even main cause of the extremely high rate of homicides in the U.S.. Canada has a high level of gun ownership, but a far lower homicide rate. So Moore looks for other reasons — including a foreign policy that regularly resorts to military solutions, and a culture that idolizes police and military violence. He concludes that corporate and political elites have a vested interest in keeping the population in a state of anxiety about crime, even when crime rates are falling, in order to stimulate consumption.

The film has some decent political aspects, though never taken far enough. There's one sequence where Moore shows the U.S. repeatedly overthrowing elected leaders and replacing them with tyrants who terrorize the population, or intervening militarily in countries, causing millions of deaths. It's a powerful few minutes, though Moore never explains the reasons for these foreign interventions.

There's also a very good segment where Moore examines why a six-year old boy brought a gun to school in Flint, Michigan and accidentally killed a classmate. He shows the mother being forced into a Workfare program, leaving early every morning to work two jobs in a suburban mall. Even with the two jobs, she's unable to pay her rent and so she and her son move into her brother's house, where the boy finds a hidden gun. With the mother at work, the son is unsupervised and tragedy results. Moore blames an uncaring governmental policy of forcing single mothers to leave their children and accept low-wage employment.

Moore indicts corporate greed and U.S. military violence as contributing to the high levels of violence in the U.S., but never links this to an anti-capitalist critique. So the documentary comes off as a populist satire of the American fixation with guns and violence, with no real recommendations for change.

Probably most viewers will conclude that gun control legislation and less mayhem on TV are needed. Democrats and some Republicans can support both these goals, so the documentary doesn't challenge the

political and economic status quo, despite its occasional, heartfelt anti-imperialist and anti-racist sentiments. Am I being too easy on the film or too hard?

A Reader

Scared by Election But Ready to Respond

Although I don't necessarily agree with all your positions, I'm an avid reader of *CHALLENGE* and await it's online installments daily. I'm a registered Democrat living in Philadelphia and can honestly say I'm scared to death about the election outcome. We have an overt fascist in power (Baby Bush) and now the voting public has sent to power the party that will send us down the road to fascism the quickest.

The Republicans and many Democrats support a totally unsubstantiated war on Iraq. They have absolutely no proof Hussein has any weapons of mass destruction and even if they did, why should we demand he dismantle them? Who is the ONLY country in the entire world that's actually used nuclear weapons against another sovereign country during a time of peace or war? The UNITED STATES. We dropped two atomic bombs on Japan during World War II. Who the hell are we to demand that other countries either not attain or get rid of weapons of mass destruction? Maybe the world should demand that weapons inspectors come into our country and dismantle ALL nuclear weapons as well as the plenty of government-built chemical and biological weapons in our arsenal? Why is it okay for us to have weapons but others are not allowed? We were the most reckless with these weapons. We actually used them against others and ended up killing hundreds of thousands.

As a gay man, a Jew and someone who is partnered with an African American man, I am scared. The Republican party, and the Bush family in particular, is heavily homophobic, anti-Semitic and racist. It was Bush, Sr. who took on to his 1988 election committee known former Nazis. I think now is the time for action. I'm not even sure what I'll do right now. I have to sit down with my partner (who is equally upset and equally politically minded), and figure out how we can respond. Please know that even though I do not agree with some of what you espouse, I'm thankful there are groups like yours who keep watch over the fas-

cists out there — including especially those right here at home.

A Concerned Philadelphian

Millions in Italy Hit Bosses Barrage

On Oct. 18, millions of workers here in Italy joined protests and rallies in 120 cities. White collars, blue collars, students and teachers united against the abolition of Article 18 of the Workers Statute of Rights, which protects against unfair firings. They also protested the new budget cuts, and the imminent dismissal of over 200,000 FIAT autoworkers.

In Florence and Rome, more than 200,000 workers marched. Support for the strike exceeded 50% of the workers in virtually every industry, with 80% in Public Transportation.

The protest was called by CGIL (the "left" union), without the support from the CISL and UIL ("moderates") for the first time since 1960. CISL and UIL and the moderate "left" parties betrayed the workers by selling out to Berlusconi's government.

These fake-left parties and the two "moderate" unions lose members daily. The day after the strike they were trying to belittle it and the number of workers in the streets. With this hateful attitude, they're showing they're the worst enemy of the workers!

The millions of workers who joined the strike demonstrated they will fight the bosses' and fake leftists' drive to destroy their future.

Bandera Rosa

ILWU Chiefs Misled Workers on War

At recent anti-war rallies in Seattle, there's been a smattering of organized labor participation, both from Organized Labor Against the War and the dockworkers union (ILWU). At the first rally an ILWU representative apologized for his union's lack of support. He said that after the dockworkers' "labor dispute" was settled he was sure they'd "do the right thing. We did the right thing in Vietnam, and we'll do the right thing this time," he promised.

But we ask, "What is the right thing?" From a working-class perspective it would be the dockworkers leading the way for the anti-war movement by refusing to load arms and supplies bound for the U.S. imperialist war machine moving into Iraq. Unfortunately the ILWU considers the "right thing" to be taking an official stance against the war but not backing it up with any real action — just as they did in Vietnam and every other war with the exception of the Bolshevik revolution. Then dockworkers refused to load arms supplying the U.S.-backed counter-revolutionaries fighting to defeat the Bolsheviks. Without a communist analysis and leadership, the ILWU will continue to

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MORE LETTERS

“support our troops” by allowing the bullets and supplies to be shipped. The potential power of this union, indeed of the entire working class, became crystal clear when Bush threatened to send federal troops onto the docks to break a strike, calling it a “threat to national security.”

If the anti-war movement expects to stop the war, it must involve the working class. If our Party hopes to sharpen the struggle over this war, we must push the organizations we’re active in to recognize the imperialist nature of this war and the power of the working class. We should up the ante in the anti-war movement by struggling to gain support in the various organizations for dockworkers’ struggles, while raising the idea that dockworkers have the power to stop shipments of goods necessary for the war effort. As we sharpen the struggle in the unions and the mass organizations, the Party must focus on recruitment.

A Comrade

Backing Steel Bosses is No Solution

I saw the letter in *CHALLENGE* about two steelworkers discussing the union District Director’s support for consolidation of the steel industry. One worker thought it might make the union stronger while the worker in PLP warned this is part of developing fascism.

The *New York Times* (11/14) reported the failed attempt of Corus, Europe’s second largest steel maker, to take over CSN, a big Brazilian steel producer. The consolidation of British Steel and Hoogoven of the Netherlands created Corus. It hasn’t made a profit since 1998, plans on eliminating 10,000 jobs and has shut down 20% of its steel-producing capacity in Britain. One analyst pointed out, “The collapse of the deal says more about the global steel market than it does

about the climate of foreign investment in Brazil.”

Steel producers around the world are in a classic case of what Marxists call a “crisis of overproduction.” From the capitalists’ viewpoint, too much steel can be produced that cannot be sold for profit. The capitalists’ response to their predicament is to slash production and jobs.

The District director’s plan to have the union help the bosses consolidate is no solution. There are millions of projects that need steel and millions of workers that want to work. But the driving force behind capitalism is to make maximum profits, not meet workers’ needs.

A few months ago, some Bethlehem Steel workers felt that if LTV went under, it would make their own company stronger. Now ISG, the gang of financiers that took over LTV and reopened it with slashed benefits, is contemplating buying Bethlehem!

Workers can struggle and we can make a living for a while. But steelworkers around the world are hurting. The answer is not consolidation but continuous daily struggle to win workers to communist revolution. In that process we fight for every job and fight against anything that weakens our class, like racism, sexism and nationalism.

Red Reader

Listen to Your Nurse

Recently I had a minor surgical procedure. While the doctor was cutting and stitching the nurse asked me, “What do you think of Homeland Security?” I replied it was a cover for further attacks against workers.

The nurse, a middle-aged white woman with 25 years on the job, said, “It’s just union-busting. Can you imagine consolidating 20 agencies and over 100,000 workers and taking away their civil service and union protections?” I said it was bigger than just the government workers and she cut

me off saying, “That’s right. Look at the dockworkers. They’re going to use this against all of us!”

She gave up a supervisor’s job in the OR to work in this clinic. She had nothing good to say about the various unions at the hospital because she sees the bosses getting away with murder while the union leaders sit on their hands. Finally she said, “I may have been a supervisor, but I come from a long line of railroad workers who were all fighters.”

A Reader

Wage System Rx For Capitalist Robbery

I’m a young worker from a rural area in Latin America where I worked on my family’s farm. Once I went for a job in the capital city but the pay was too low. Then a friend in the army told me the army paid very well and that if I volunteered I could leave whenever I wanted. I joined but soon discovered that neither was true. Later I came to the US.

Here I went to a school to learn to sew and became a garment worker. I’ve been working here for three years.

I’ve been working in the same shop for the last seven months. The boss seems to trust the workers. He drinks beer with us, gives us candies and cookies, jokes with us and lets us use the office telephone for personal calls.

I told my brother and he warned, “Don’t trust the bosses. They’re all shameless thieves. Because you trust them, you probably don’t write down the work you’ve done, leaving everything to the bosses’ ‘honesty.’ He’s probably stealing you blind.”

“That’s impossible,” I replied. “My bosses are good people. They’re Koreans, from a far-off continent. They put up with a lot from me when I didn’t know the work very well. The boss herself taught me the operations. And they joke with me and treat me well.”

A month later, a co-worker came to me and said, “My check’s only for \$120, and I worked very hard for a whole week.” I advised him, “Tell the boss, because I worked on a similar

machine and I got more.”

He talked to the boss who then agreed he’d made a “mistake” and had shorted him \$70. When I heard this, I started to doubt the boss. “If he does it with another, maybe he does it with me,” I thought. I began detailing all the work I did.

On the Saturday before pay day we turn in the tickets from which our pay is computed. On seeing the paper the boss wanted me to sign, he hadn’t included work I’d done cutting 510 pieces. He told me he’d “forgotten” I’d done that job and credited me for the 510 pieces.

I told my brother all this and said he’d been right all along. Now I write down all the work I do. Last week I caught the boss trying to rob me of 100 pieces I’d made. My conclusion? “Don’t trust any boss. All are thieves.”

A worker who opened his eyes

CHALLENGE comment:

Thanks for sharing your experience. All workers need such understanding if the working class is to destroy capitalism and all the evils it produces. This won’t happen if workers believe bosses can be our friends.

But the bosses rob much more from us every day. The worker’s labor adds value to the natural resource, converting it into a useful product. The boss sells this product, deducts his expenses for materials, machines and workers’ wages and the rest is his profit. The workers’ wages represent just a fraction of the value they produced. This value added by - but not paid to - the worker is called surplus value, or profit, stolen from the worker’s labor.

Under communism, without bosses, profits or money, workers as a class will reap the full value their labor produces and will distribute it based on their class’s needs.



Outdoing the Nazis ... Homeland INsecurity

Racism and fascism usually initiate attacks on one group of workers and end up attacking most workers. Recently the Homeland Security Agency said it will spy on thousands of Iraqi immigrants living in the U.S. Now the latest Homeland Security bill should make everyone feel more INsecure than ever. Here is what *New York Times* (right-wing) columnist William Safire says (11/14) it will do:

Rulers’ Racism Runs Rampant

During the Vietnam War, U.S. General Mark Clark told reporters that one American life was worth more than 50 Vietnamese lives. Well, it seems Bush’s chief political strategist Carl Rove has raised even Clark’s racist ratio to 66 to 1. When questioned after a recent speech by a woman who politely asked “if the administration was concerned over the possibility that 200,000 innocent Iraqis might die in an American-led invasion,” Rove responded: “I’m more concerned about the 3,000 who died on 9/11.” (*New York Times*, 11/14)

“Every purchase you make with a credit card, every magazine subscription you buy and medical prescription you fill, every Web site you visit and e-mail you send or receive, every academic grade you receive, every bank deposit you make, every trip you book and every event you attend — all these transactions and communications will go into what the Defense Department describes as ‘a virtual, centralized grand database.’

“To this computerized dossier on your private life from commercial sources, add every piece of information that government has about you — passport application, driver’s license and bridge toll records, judicial and divorce records, complaints from nosy neighbors to the F.B.I., your lifetime paper trail plus the latest hidden camera surveillance — and you have the super-snoop’s dream: a ‘Total Information Awareness’ about every U.S. citizen.”

Hitler’s Nazi Gestapo would envy U.S. rulers!☹

LAPD War on Terror in South Central LA

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 18 -

New LAPD chief William Bratton is leading the LA cops on a rampage of racist murder in South Central LA, with five “officer-involved” shootings in three days. Four people are dead and two are seriously wounded, including one Latino marine. Bratton is unleashing “a sustained crackdown on gang-related violence in South LA,” using “gang-related” as a pretext to terrorize black and Latin workers and youth. The papers have lied about these cases. Families and friends of the victims are angry despite priests and grief counselors trying to calm them. Liberal Bratton has ordered a 30% increase in the number of cops to attack the working class harder.



Bratton, previously police chief in NYC and Boston, is a leading proponent of “community policing” and the “broken windows” theory to intensify police repression by involving local residents under the guise of fighting “quality of life” crimes. (More next issue.) ☹